



February 8, 2023

Representative Jamie Becker-Finn, Chair  
House Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee  
509 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Becker-Finn and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Ryan Jelinek and I am a physician at Hennepin Healthcare and a board member of Minnesota Doctors for Health Equity, a nonprofit organization representing over 300 health care professionals dedicated to using their voices, knowledge, and influence to eliminate the inequities that exist in Minnesota, with a particular focus on advocating for policies that advance tangible steps toward equity and meaningful change.

Health care providers witness the senseless agony of gun violence every day in the United States, both the acute needs, and the long-term psychological impact on survivors, families, communities and on the health care workers who care for survivors. With an estimated 400 million guns in the country, the rising numbers of deaths by gun violence are not expected to decrease soon. Each year, an average of 45,000 people die by a firearm.

All injuries and deaths by firearms are an unnecessary tragedy, leaving a wake of emotional, physical, and financial pain for survivors, families, and the healthcare workers who treat them. These events do not impact our country equally. Black men in this country are 17 times more likely to be killed with a gun by someone else, and white men are six times more likely to kill themselves. Gun violence has become the leading cause of death among children, and 13 children die every day from guns.

Gun violence has been declared a public health issue by the American Medical Association and the American Public Health Association. Health care providers are working to reduce gun violence by educating the community on gun safety, providing care for survivors and families, and supporting legislative efforts to increase research on gun violence prevention, and evidence-based interventions to stop the rising tide of gun violence in our communities. But we need policymakers to act to decrease gun violence and save lives today.

Therefore, I am writing today to offer strong support for HF396, HF14, HF15, and HF601 and urge their swift passage. This legislation would help prevent further gun violence and stem the tide on this worsening problem that is compounding health disparities for the Minnesotans most impacted by the many inequities that exist in our state.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Ryan Jelinek DO  
Board Member at MDHEQ  
Chair of Gun Violence Workgroup

Elizabeth Rogers MD  
Board Member at MDHEQ